

A375_2016AbstractDavidsenStephanieS

Abstract

The current study examined predictors of attitudes toward sex offenders, focusing on Belief in a Just World (BJW) and religiosity as variables that were likely to be related to attitudes toward sex offenders based on previous research. Predictors of attitudes toward sex offenders may facilitate better understanding of recidivism rates among sex offenders and may aid professionals who work with sex offenders, such as probation and parole officers. Hypotheses were that Religiosity would be negatively correlated with attitudes toward sex offenders and BJW would be positively correlated with attitudes toward sex offenders. Responses from 252 participants were collected using a Qualtrics survey. The order of the surveys was randomized. There was no significant correlation between Religiosity and attitudes toward sex offenders. BJW and attitudes toward sex offenders were significantly positively correlated, possibly because attitudes toward sex offenders differ between survey conditions. It is possible that attitudes toward sex offenders are influenced by the measurement in the same study of attitudes toward other groups, such as victims of sex offenses. These findings could have significant implications for future research done within the Belief in a Just World theory, as the current study suggests data on attitudes should be controlled for the known presence of other groups in study designs.

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